

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 01607 041841Z

64

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 H-01 SY-04 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 /029 W  
----- 023747

R 041635Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6681  
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 1607

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, IN

SUBJECT: HARCOS/FLETCHER: DONOVAN'S CONVERSATIONS WITH  
GOI OFFICIALS IN DELHI

REF: CALCUTTA 02\$37#

1. MISS DONOVAN'S MEETING WITH HOME SECRETARY MUKERJI JANUARY 31 WAS DISAPPOINTING FOR HER. MUKERJI WAS POLITE BUT NOT VERY RESPONSIVE. HE HAD JOINT SECRETARY NARASIMHA, WHO HAS BEEN HANDLING THE CASE IN DELHI, WITH HIM. NARASIMHA DOMINATED THE CONVERSATION FROM THE INDIAN SIDE, TAKING A HARD LINE AT ALL TIMES WHILE MUKERJI SAT SILENT. DONOVAN'S ATTEMPT TO GIVE MUKERJI A COPY OF THE HARCOS/FLETCHER DRAFT CONFESSION WAS DEFLECTED BY A TURN IN THE CONVERSATION AND SHE NEVER GOT BACK TO OFFERING IT. MUKERJI ENDED THE HALF-HOUR DISCUSSION BY FINALLY SAYING THAT IF WAS POSSIBLE FOR THE GOI TO WITHDRAW A PROSECUTION UNDER THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT BUT THIS WAS DONE ONLY VERY RARELY AND THE CASE IN QUESTION WAS NOT ONE FOR WHICH AN EXCEPTION WOULD BE MADE. DONOVAN, PERHAPS GRASPING FOR STRAWS, FOUND SOME LIGHT IN THE ADMISSION THAT A WITHDRAWAL OF PROSECUTION WAS AT LEAST POSSIBLE.

2. DONOVAN ON FEBRUARY 1 DRAFTED A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER REQUESTING AN INTERVIEW. CHARGE AGREED TO TRANSMIT THE LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY P.N. DHAR, AND  
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 01607 041841Z

THIS LETTER WAS SENT OVER TO DHAR'S OFFICE ON THE MORNING

OF FEBRUARY 3. DHAR HAS NOW REGRETTED FOR THE PM BUT OFFERED TO SEE DONOVAN HIMSELF. (DONOVAN HAS GONE BACK TO CALCUTTA AND WILL RETURN TO DELHI ABOUT FEBRUARY 6.) ON FEBRUARY 1 SHE ALSO MET WITH WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER CIY WHO WAS IN DELHI (AT RAY'S INITIATIVE). RAY ASKED HER FOR A SIGNED COPY OF THE CONFESSION WHICH, HE SAID, HE WANTED TO SHOW TO HOME MINISTER BRAMANANDA REDDY IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. UNFORTUNATELY DONOVAN DID NOT HAVE A SIGNED CONFESSION AND RAY FINALLY AGREED TO SHOW THE DRAFT CONFESSION TO REDDY INSTEAD.

3. COMMENT: THE POLITICIANS CONTINUE TO EXPRESS INTEREST IN THE CASE; THE BUREAUCRATS ARE EITHER NEGATIVE OR EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS. THE CHARGE DISCUSSED THE CASE BRIEFLY WITH P.N. DHAR JUST OVER A WEEK AGO AND DHAR EXPRESSED BOTH SURPRISE THAT THE CASE WAS STILL GOING ON AND A STRONG DESIRE IN SEEING IT SETTLED IN THE INTEREST OF INDIA

-US RELATIONS.

THIS, PLUS CHIEF MINISTER RAY'S ACTIVITY, OFFERS THE ONLY ENCOURAGING NOTE IN THE FACE OF THE PERSISTING FOOT-DRAGGING OF THE BUREAUCRACY HERE IN DELHI AND IN CALCUTTA AND THE POSSIBLE DELAYS WHICH THE CHANGE IN JUDGES IN CALCUTTA MAY ENTAIL. END COMMENT.

SCHNEIDER

NOTE BY OCT: NEW DELHI 1607 #AS RECEIVED.

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## Message Attributes

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